



PSYCHOLOGY 2550A (570)
Introduction to Personality Theory and Research
Fall/Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Sauder
Email: asauder5@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

A survey of the history, methodology and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include: evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

Prerequisite(s): A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 4 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: PSYCHOL

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College at Western University
Psychology 2550A (570)
Introduction to Personality Theory & Research
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Sauder

Email: asauder5@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Virtually by
appointment

Course Description

A survey of the history, methodology, and content of the study of individual differences. Topics to be covered include: evaluation of typical personality assessment methods and a consideration of modern empirical research in personality theory and assessment.

Learning Objectives

Throughout the course, students are expected to be active and reflective participants and will be asked to examine their own expressions of personality while critically evaluating the ways in which common personality traits influence individuals' behaviour and social relationships.

By the end of this course, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Describe the costs and benefits of the most common techniques used to assess and measure personality today.
2. Explain the behavioural effects of personality and the impact of biology and conditioning on individual differences.
3. Discuss the ways in which personality theories have developed and how they are relevant to modern society and social concerns.
4. Critically examine the contributions of the major personality theorists and assess the impact of their work through discussion, reflection, and class exercises.

Class Format IN-PERSON

Texts and Readings

Required:

Larsen, R., Buss, D., King, D. B., & Ensley, C. (2023). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (3rd Canadian edition). Toronto: McGraw-Hill. (Cost: ebook with Connect \$89, Paperback with Connect \$153. Used physical text is acceptable, but registration with Connect is required.)

* You must register on the CONNECT website. Your registration includes the e-book. See CONNECT registration instructions on the OWL website. You may choose to ALSO purchase the paper copy of the text - but you still need to register on CONNECT to access the chapter reading assignments and any bonus activities.

IMPORTANT:

This course utilizes two websites: OWL Brightspace and the CONNECT Platform.

OWL Brightspace: Will host course announcements, grades, lecture slides, and any supplemental materials.

CONNECT: An interactive website - hosts your e-textbook, chapter readings, and activities.

Technology Requirements

This course will require a stable high speed internet connection and a computer/laptop.

Structure of the Course

This course begins on Thursday, September 4, 2025, and continues until Thursday, December 4, 2025, honouring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

Lectures are intended to complement the textbook and not simply repeat it. Thus, I will present some material that is not in the textbook. I will also not cover all the material in the textbook. Class attendance will significantly increase how much you get out of this course. This course incorporates both lectures and dialogic discourse and is designed to promote engaged critical thinking. It is important to **complete all required readings, videos, and any other materials BEFORE CLASS** in order to best engage your colleagues in a discussion of various topics relating to the study of personality. Students are expected to participate by asking relevant questions and/or by providing appropriate critiques and examples. The responsibility for a successful learning experience is shared by all the participants – students and professor alike. I am trusting that you will share in the responsibility in making this a successful learning experience.

Lecture slides will be posted on OWL each week. It is important to note that these lecture slides may be incomplete (i.e., they will contain some, but not all, of the information covered in lectures and/or the text). These lecture notes should not be relied upon as a replacement for attending lectures.

Evaluation

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|--------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Test #1 (Ch. 1-3) – Sept 18 | 5% |
| 2. Test #2 (Ch. 1-5) – Sept 25 | 25% |
| 3. Test #3 (Ch. 6-11) – Oct 30 | 25% |
| 4. Final Exam (Ch. 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19) | 30% |
| 5. Chapter Reading Assignments (CONNECT) | 15% |

Tests (in-class, 55%) and Exam (30%)

Tests will be multiple-choice format. Test 1 is approximately 15 questions (25 minutes) from chapters 1-3. The purpose of this test is to familiarize students with the types of test questions in this course and allow you to gauge your study strategies for the upcoming tests. Tests 2 and 3 will have 100 questions (2 hours). The final exam will have approximately 150 questions (3 hrs). Tests will be held in-class on the dates indicated.

Chapter Reading Practice - CONNECT (15%)

As you read through the chapter, you will complete the associated chapter reading practice on the CONNECT platform. These assignments are designed to reinforce the major concepts of that chapter and thus will help you prepare for the tests. Each chapter assignment should likely take you approximately 60 - 90 mins. You may reopen the assignments as many times as you like. You will receive the full mark for each chapter simply for completing it. There are 17 chapters for a total of 15%. As long as you complete the chapter assignments you will receive full marks – regardless of how many questions you got right or wrong.

Chapter Assignments 1 - 5 will close at 11:59pm Thursday, Sept 25

Chapter Assignments 6 - 11 will close at 11:59pm Thursday, Oct 30

Chapter Assignments 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 will close at 11:59pm Thursday, Dec 4

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

A+	90–100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80–89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70–79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60–69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50–59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Classroom Etiquette. It will be expected that all cell phones will be silenced during class time.

Tardiness and Early Departure from Class. We all contribute to the integrity of our learning environment and therefore it is important to arrive on time and to be fully present for the entire class time. Although it is understandable that occasionally circumstances can result in a few minutes' delay, **it is unacceptable (and rude) to habitually arrive late or leave earlier than the class is dismissed by the instructor.** Students with extenuating circumstances may advise the instructor in advance of these circumstances to request occasional accommodation if necessary. **Any accommodations requested will be granted on the basis of fairness to all students in the class.**

Email Etiquette. Email is for short answers or setting up appointments. If you have content- or course-based problems, please email me to set up an appointment. In the **email subject line**, please include the course that you are emailing about (PSYCH 2550A).

Please consider how you address me in your salutation. This is an academic class and I am your professor. Also, consider the tone of your email. I will respond to your email **within 2 business days**. If you have not heard from me **after** 2 business days, then please feel free to contact me again. I will not respond to emails over the weekend.

To ensure you have thoroughly reviewed the course syllabus and are familiar with its contents, please complete the following task: Before the start of our second class (on Sept 11, 2025), please send an email to Dr. Sauder (asauder5@uwo.ca) that includes the title and artist of your

favourite song from the 1990s. Ensure your name and the course code is in the email subject line. This brief task serves both as confirmation of your engagement with the syllabus and as an introduction to me about you and your musical preferences and will earn you a 2% bonus to your final grade. Failure to complete this task by the stated deadline will not result in any penalty.

Drop Date

The final date to drop a half course without academic penalty is **December 1, 2025**.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic & Readings
Week 1 – Sept 4	Introduction to the course: Syllabus review, CONNECT Ch. 1: Introduction to Personality Psychology
Week 2 – Sept 11	Ch. 2: Personality Assessment, Measurement, and Research Design Part 1: The Dispositional Domain Ch. 3: Traits and Trait Taxonomies
Week 3 – Sept 18	Ch. 4: Theoretical and Measurement Issues in Trait Psychology Ch. 5: Personality Dispositions Over Time: Stability, Coherence, and Change **Test #1 – Chapters 1-3 (5%)
Week 4 – Sept 25	**Test #2 – Chapters 1-5 (25%)
Week 5 – Oct 2	Part 2: The Biological Domain Ch. 6: Genetics and Personality Ch. 7: Physiological Approaches to Personality
Week 6 – Oct 9	Ch. 7: Physiological Approaches to Personality (cont'd) Ch. 8: Evolutionary Perspectives on Personality
Week 7 – Oct 16	Part 3: The Intrapsychic Domain Ch. 9: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Personality Ch. 10: Psychoanalytic Approaches: Contemporary Issues
Week 8 – Oct 23	Ch. 11: Motives and Personality
Week 9 – Oct 30	** Test #3 – Chapters 6-11 (25%)
READING WEEK – Nov 1-9, 2025 – NO CLASS	
Week 10 – Nov 13	Part 4: The Cognitive/Experiential Domain Ch. 12: Cognitive Topics in Personality Ch. 13: Emotion and Personality
Week 11 – Nov 20	Part 5: The Social and Cultural Domain Ch. 15: Personality and Social Interaction Ch. 16: Sex, Gender, and Personality
Week 12 – Nov 27	Part 6: The Adjustment Domain

	Ch. 18: Stress, Coping, Adjustment, and Health Ch. 19: Disorders of Personality
Week 13 – Dec 4	EXAM REVIEW SESSION (optional)
Dec 11-22	FINAL EXAM - Chapters 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 (30%) Date To Be Scheduled

Department of Psychology Policies Related to AI Tools

1. Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any submitted coursework unless express permission has been granted by your instructor.

Students **should not have AI tools write any part of their assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.** Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

Additional information: Students can use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask ChatGPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and outdated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

2. Policy on Use of Translation Tools*

The Department of Psychology views the unapproved use of translation or language applications as an academic offence.

Any usage of translation applications or language generation by students to complete specific assigned work for this course **must be approved** by the instructor **prior** to submitting the work **and noted by the student in the submitted work** itself.

Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve or translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own **constitutes plagiarism.** You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

Why do we have this policy?

- Translation is intellectual work and produces intellectual property, thus any text which is translated must cite the translator.
- Psychology endeavors to advance students' linguistic, analytic, and reasoning competencies – this can not happen outside of specific language competencies.
- Earning a university degree signals that an individual has advanced literacy and communicative skill in the language of instruction at the university; this is English at King's University College at Western University. If translation machines are used by students without regulation, we will have no way of certifying whether these competencies exist and fewer mechanism for encouraging students to do the hard work to develop them.

** Based on the policy developed by the Department of Child and Youth Studies*

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/S_MC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports - TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.